

1 *Docket No. 7032*
2 *Joint Petition of Vermont Electric Power*
3 *Company, Inc., Green Mountain Power*
4 *Corporation and the Town of Stowe Electric*
5 *Department for a certificate of public good,*
6 *pursuant to 30 V.S.A. Section 248, authorizing the*
7 *so-called Lamoille County 115 kV Project,*
8 *consisting of the construction of a transmission line*
9 *from Stowe to Duxbury, Vermont, and*
10 *accompanying facilities*
11
12

13 **GREGG HILL RESIDENTS SURREBUTTAL TESTIMONY**
14 **BY FAITH BIELER**
15
16

17 Q. What is your name and qualifications to give this testimony?

18 A. Faith Bieler, 2351 Gregg Hill Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677, owner of the
19 wildlife refuge on Gregg Hill Road mentioned in "First set of information
20 requests served by the Agency of Natural Resources on the Gregg Hill Residents
21 (GHR)."
22

23 Q. Are you the owner of land along the east side of Gregg Hill Road that you have
24 designated a wildlife refuge?

25 A. Yes.
26

27 Q. Please identify the geographic location of the refuge.

28 A. [Tax Map 09-005.000, Book 138]
29

30 Q. How many acres have been preserved for the refuge?

31 A. 53
32

1 Q. For how long has this property been preserved as a refuge?

2 A. For 28 years. It was purchased March 6, 1977.

3

4 Q. Please describe what you have done and/or are doing as manager of the refuge.

5 A. We purchased these 53 acres for the sole purpose of creating and preserving it as
6 a wildlife refuge. This land is separate from, not adjacent to, and not in the
7 viewscape of the Bieler residence and farm. To enhance the wildlife habitat, we
8 originally dug a pond in part of the marsh area to attract and nurture water-loving
9 animals. We also began annual brushhogging on the west side of the refuge
10 mowing down large growth and thereby creating an open area with low
11 vegetation, the preferred food supply for larger mammals. The marsh area, east of
12 and adjacent to the pond, is a biologically rich ecosystem. It produces quantities
13 of vegetation and has a diversity of flora and fauna. It is a breeding place for
14 many birds and nursery for amphibians, reptiles, and fish. It is a vast feeding area
15 for migratory birds and waterfowl.

16

17 Q. For how long into the future do you intend to preserve the refuge?

18 A. In perpetuity.

19

20 Q. Please describe the wildlife species that are sheltered in the refuge, the seasons in
21 which they appear, and the natural behaviors that viewers are able to observe from
22 Gregg Hill Road.

23 A. Gregg Hill neighbors overlooking the refuge report to me that they see, on a daily
24 basis, moose, both male, female and young, deer, and that they regularly see bear.
25 They observe geese (Canada), ducks (blacks, mallards, and teal), smaller non-
26 aquatic birds (American woodcock, snipe, redwinged blackbird, marsh wren &
27 swamp sparrow) spring, summer, and fall. Harrier hawks, peregrine falcons are
28 also viewed spring, summer, fall. I myself have seen all this, plus: otter, mink,
29 fishercat, muskrat, beaver, a single snow goose, great blue heron, all seen in
30 spring, summer, and fall. Fishercat and mink also seen in winter. Unusual

1 migrating ducks are viewed in fall and spring. In the marsh refuge during spring
2 breeding season, I note through sight and sound: spring peepers, gray tree frogs,
3 green frogs, bullfrogs, Northern leopard frogs and pickerel frogs. For reptiles, I
4 have identified painted turtles and snapping turtles.
5

6 Q. Is the refuge available to the general public, and of your own knowledge, what is
7 a representative number of observers, how would you characterize the purposes of
8 their visits, and what other indications do you have that the refuge is a public
9 good?

10 A. The refuge is easily accessible to the public and is in full view from Gregg Hill
11 Road. People park their cars along Gregg Hill Road and step right onto the refuge.
12 The land is Not Posted. It's available for viewing and exploring. Observers are:
13 (1) Gregg Hill residents in the course of their daily lives whether in cars, jogging,
14 bicycling, dog walking; (2) Nature visitors both local and from afar (including
15 commercial ecotours, e.g., Vermont Bicycle Tours) who come for a scenic detour
16 off Route 100 by car, bicycle and foot. They include birdwatchers, photographers,
17 artists, naturalists, joggers, hunters in all seasons and sportsmen who come to
18 train their retrievers (although I discourage this [the retrievers] when it comes to
19 my attention, because this activity can disrupt the natural habitat I am creating.)
20 Visitors also come in the winter to cross-country ski, snowshoe and track animals.
21

22 Q. Does this conclude your testimony?

23 A. Yes.
24
25
26

27 By Faith Bieler

28 A Gregg Hill Resident